

NEW YORK TIMES

12 September 1985

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A-12

Ex-Italian Agent Ordered Extradited From U.S.

By RALPH BLUMENTHAL

Special to The New York Times

A former Italian intelligence official, in jail in New York since March, was ordered extradited to Italy yesterday to face financial fraud charges growing out of the 1981 bankruptcy of the Italian Banco Ambrosiano.

The prisoner, Dr. Francesco Pazienza, a 36-year-old nonpracticing physician, has long been a subject of keen interest in Italy, where his name has also cropped up in investigations of the shooting of Pope John Paul II and of the purported plottings of a rightist underground.

Since he was arrested and jailed under disputed circumstances, Dr. Pazienza, who formerly served in the Italian Information and Military Security Service, has been telling tales of secret missions and intrigues, including work he says he undertook without pay to aid the United States Government. A White House spokesman has denied that Dr. Pazienza ever performed any authorized missions.

Claims Tip on Pope

Dr. Pazienza has also said he performed diplomatic services for the Vatican, helped obtain information on a trip to Libya by Billy Carter and was tipped off about a possible plot against the Pope six months before the shooting.

Concerning the fraud charges, Dr. Pazienza has denied any wrongdoing, asserting that the authorities in Italy were out to frame him and that he feared for his life if he was returned there.

"They're trying to create a scapegoat," Dr. Pazienza, clad in an orange prison jumpsuit, said in a recent three-hour interview in a conference room of the Manhattan Correctional Center in Foley Square.

In the extradition ruling yesterday, Federal District Judge Charles L. Brieant Jr. found that Dr. Pazienza had been properly arrested by United States Customs Service agents when he appeared voluntarily as an informant at a prearranged meeting on March 4.

He was granted a stay of the ruling pending an expected appeal.

Plans Voluminous Appeal

Dr. Pazienza, interviewed by telephone from the jail after the ruling was announced, said, "I was expecting this kind of thing." He added that he would personally prepare a voluminous appeal, which could go to the United States Supreme Court.

The Italian charges on which the extradition is based accuse Dr. Pazienza and five other defendants of conspiring to defraud Banco Ambrosiano of about \$3 million lent to another concern, Prato Verde, "with the deliberate in-



Associated Press

Dr. Francesco Pazienza

tention of defaulting on the loan and of using the funds for personal purposes," according to Judge Brieant.

The judge also said part of the money was supposed to have been used to bribe Italian magistrates hearing an appeal of the conviction of Banco Ambrosiano's president, Roberto Calvi. Mr. Calvi was found hanging from a bridge in London in 1982, either a suicide or a murder victim.

Much of the story of Dr. Pazienza, who has been the subject of more than 1,000 news articles in the last 18 months in Italy alone, remains perplexing.

Much Remains Unverified

Dennis Fagan, special agent in charge of the Customs Service in New York, said that there was "some truth" as well as many inconsistencies in Dr. Pazienza's assertions and that much remained to be verified.

"He's thrown out little bones, but he's put no meat on them," Mr. Fagan said.

A White House spokesman, Edward P. Djerejian, deputy press secretary for foreign affairs, said last week that Dr. Pazienza had never performed any missions for the United States. "As far as we know, this is utter fantasy," he said. "No such mission or any other association with Pazienza ever took place or was even considered."

At the Vatican, the chief spokesman, Joaquín Navarro Valls, said the Vatican had consistently declined to discuss the Pazienza case.

Tells of Vatican Link

One of his first assignments, after joining the intelligence agency in early 1980, Dr. Pazienza said, was to ex-

change views between the Vatican and Saudi Arabia on the situation in Lebanon and on Israel's position that foreign embassies be situated in Jerusalem rather than Tel Aviv. He said that position angered the Vatican.

In 1980, Dr. Pazienza said, the military intelligence chief, Gen. Giuseppe Santovito, was asked by Michael A. Ledeen, an American foreign affairs consultant, to provide information on a trip that Mr. Carter, President Carter's brother, had made to Libya.

Mr. Ledeen — then a senior fellow at Georgetown University's Center for Strategic and International Studies, editor of the Washington Quarterly and a specialist in Italian history — said in interviews that he had approached "everyone I knew in Italy" for help in checking out information for a magazine article on Mr. Carter.

The article, part of a series of columns written together with Arnaud de Borchgrave, now editor in chief of The Washington Times, appeared in The New Republic shortly before the 1980 Presidential election.

Meeting With Arafat Reported

It asserted that President Carter's brother had met with Yasir Arafat, head of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and George Habash, leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and had received \$50,000 in travel money from the Libyans that he did not report to the United States Government, as required of those serving foreign governments. At the time, Mr. Carter was already a subject of controversy over his contacts with the Libyans.

Mr. Carter later said he had met briefly with Mr. Habash but denied having met Mr. Arafat or having received unreported funds. A Justice Department investigation found that Mr. Carter had "lied to Government agents," but no charges were brought.

Mr. de Borchgrave said last week that he did not know Dr. Pazienza but that Mr. Ledeen had used the Italian to help obtain a tape recording to confirm information on the Billy Carter article.

Dr. Pazienza also said that on Dec. 9, 1980, he and Mr. Ledeen carried a message from General Santovito to Alexander M. Haig, then president of United Technologies Corporation and shortly to be named Secretary of State for the newly elected President Reagan.

Haig Recalls 'Courtesy Visit'

General Haig, now a consultant in Washington, said he recalled receiving a "courtesy visit" from Mr. Ledeen and Dr. Pazienza in 1980. He said he no longer remembered the subject but thought it had to do with what he called "the Communist conspiracy."

Mr. Ledeen said he recalled the meeting but declined to discuss the sub-

Continued